

**SPOTTED DOG ACQUISITION
FACT SHEET
AUGUST 10, 2010**

FWP proposes to purchase the 27,616-acre Spotted Dog property, in Powell County, from Rock Creek Cattle Company. FWP also proposes to lease for ten years 10,260 acres of intermingled Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) lands to establish a 38,000-acre Wildlife Management Area (WMA) between I-90 and Highway 12. Access to the property is from Deer Lodge, Avon and Elliston.

FWP would pay the fair market value of approximately \$15.2 million (~\$550/acre) for the Spotted Dog property. The project would be funded by the Natural Resource Damage Program (NRDP) with a final decision on the funding scheduled for late August. FWP would ask that the Land Board make its approval of this project contingent upon the department receiving funding for the acquisition through the NRDP. The net present value of the 10-year DNRC grazing lease is \$148,869, which will also be paid for by NRDP. Finally, FWP has requested \$1,225,140 from NRDP for a five-year maintenance fund for the property, although this component of the project requires no action by the Land Board.

The proposed Spotted Dog WMA is exceptional in the quantity of intact native grassland that would be conserved for wildlife within its boundaries. Currently, deeded and leased acres constitute the second-largest block of privately owned native grasslands in Montana, west of the Continental Divide. The size and expanse of this grassland habitat complex, coupled with its native qualities, make it exceptional and especially worthy of perpetual conservation. The property is exceptional in the availability of surface water scattered across the property, in the form of seeps, springs, and creeks. These waters and wet meadows greatly enhance the ability of the land to attract and produce wildlife. Spotted Dog is exceptional winter range for elk, mule deer and antelope—quite likely among the best remaining winter ranges in Montana. Over 1,000 wintering elk were observed on the property in 2010. Topography, vegetation, connectivity, size and juxtaposition with elk and deer summer ranges along the Continental Divide are the primary contributing factors to the inherent quality of this property as big game winter range. Over 180 wildlife species are found on the property, including 25 species listed as state species of concern and two species listed as *Threatened* under the federal Endangered Species Act (lynx and grizzly bear).

REQUESTED ACTION:	>	Approval of fee title acquisition contingent upon FWP receiving funding through the NRD program
SELLER:	>	Rock Creek Cattle Company
PROPERTY RIGHT TO BE ACQUIRED:	>	Fee Title
PROPERTY DATA	>	Property located in Powell County, Montana 3 miles Northeast of Deer Lodge

- **Draft Environmental Assessment distributed FWP**
- **Public Meeting in Deer Lodge on 07/14/10**
- **30-day comment period ended 07/30/10**
- **Decision Notice issued 08/02/10**
- **Approved by FWP Commission on 08/05/10**
- **NRDP Trustee's Meeting to approve funding on 08/26/10, pending Land Board approval**

A total of 108 people signed in at the public hearing in Deer Lodge. Thirteen (13) people testified on the record. Of these, four (4) may be characterized as supportive, two (2) conditionally supportive, two (2) opposed to government land ownership, one (1) opposed to NRD funds being prioritized to fund this project, three (3) concerned about the proposed funding and process, and one (1) concerned about the cumulative effects on adjacent landowners.

A total of 101 individuals or organizations provided written comments for the record. A total of 54 individuals and organizations (53% of all who commented) indicated support for FWP to purchase the Spotted Dog property. A total of 32 (32%) individuals and organizations registered opposition to FWP acquiring Spotted Dog WMA. The remaining 15 individuals or organizations (15%) did not state an opinion as to whether FWP should acquire the proposed Spotted Dog WMA. A summary of specific comments may be found on pages 11-13 of the Decision Notice.